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International Organization for Migration Background Guide 2026

Written by Ashley Lynn Rutenbeck and Courtney Thomas



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National Model United Nations Washington DC Conference (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to your committee, the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Ashley Lynn Rutenbeck and Assistant Director Courtney Thomas. Ashley holds a Bachelor's in Public Policy and Administration with certifications in Advancing Sustainable Development and Green Fiscal Policy, and serves as Vice President of a nonprofit organization supporting veterans with a focus on education and community impact. She is also the Gulf Coast Director of Sales for a marketing and branding company specializing in strategic growth and brand development. Courtney holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics. She currently works as a transfer pricing consultant at an accounting firm in New York, United States of America. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Kaytlyn Marcotte, Catherine Tomczyk, and Tobias Willms, and Secretary-General, Ashlee Rolheiser.

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Facilitating Pathways for Regular Migration
2. Supporting Safe and Dignified Return, and Sustainable Reintegration

IOM is a specialized United Nations agency designed to address migration challenges, combat human trafficking and exploitation, and ensure the well being and social integration of migrants. The 174 Member States meet annually to set the organization's policies, programs, and budget, while also overseeing the activities of the Director-General and subsidiary bodies. IOM serves as a forum for Member States to discuss migration issues and collaborate on international standards, data collection and analysis, and comprehensive solutions.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. ET (DC time) on 15 October 2026 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•DC Position Papers website](#).

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact Under-Secretary-General, Catherine Tomczyk, at dcusg.catherine@nmunstaff.org or the Secretary-General, Ashlee Rolheiser, at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Ashley Lynn Rutenbeck, Director
Courtney Thomas, Assistant Director



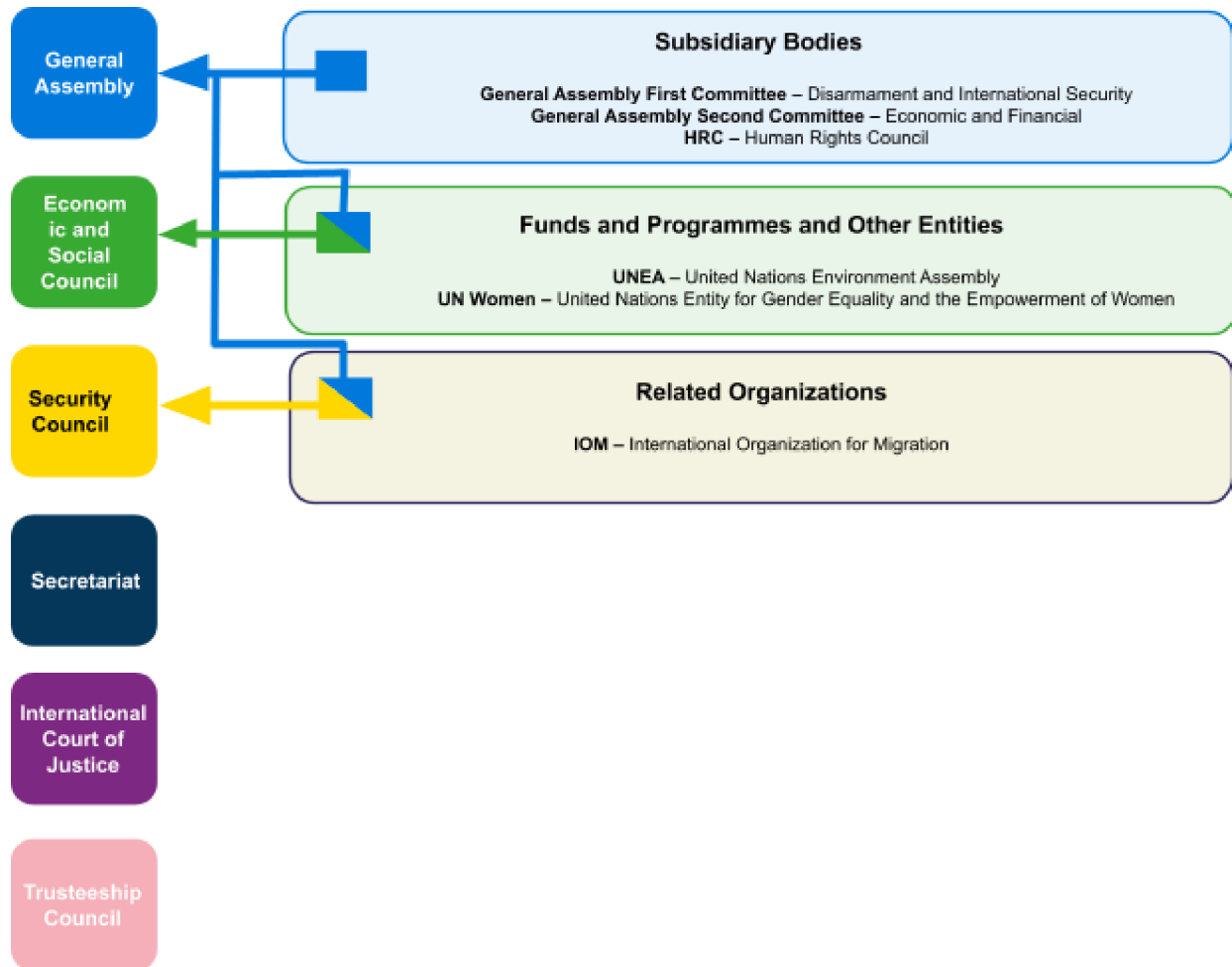
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United Nations System at NMUN•DC

This diagram illustrates the United Nations system simulated at NMUN•DC. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee’s position, purpose, and powers within the United Nations system.





Committee Overview

Introduction

In 1951, the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) was founded and later renamed IOM in 1989, becoming a United Nations specialized agency in 2016 to better manage migration challenges.¹ In 2019, IOM became Coordinator and Secretariat of the United Nations Migration Network, working with agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Labour Organization (ILO), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to promote safe and dignified migration.² As of 2026, IOM is active in 171 countries with more than 550 field offices across six regions.³ IOM works towards protecting migrants' rights, fostering social and economic development through migration, and enhancing the understanding of migration issues by gathering detailed data.⁴

IOM supports countries managing large movements of refugees and migrants, emphasizing protection and enhancing its role in United Nations inter-agency mechanisms.⁵ This collaboration reinforces IOM's influence in global migration discussions and ensures migration issues are prioritized internationally.⁶ With 304 million migrants worldwide, IOM addresses complex challenges outlined in General Assembly resolution 70/1 on "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (2030 Agenda) (2015), particularly targeting Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty, inequality, and justice.⁷ The 2030 Agenda promotes orderly, safe, and responsible migration, focusing on migrants' rights to healthcare, education, and protection from human trafficking.⁸

Mandate, Function and Powers

Rooted in the IOM constitution, the mandate encompasses facilitating the organized transfer of migrants, including refugees and displaced persons, and providing essential migration services such as recruitment, language training, and medical exams.⁹ It also serves as a forum for Member States to discuss migration issues, with all activities executed in concordance with the requests and agreements of the Member States involved.¹⁰ IOM's pivotal role in shaping international migration policy culminated in the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) in 2018, following its support for the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (New York Declaration).¹¹

Reflecting its mission and the broader objectives set out in its constitution, the mandate of IOM can be summarized as follows:

¹ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *IOM History*. 2021.

² Ibid.

³ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Members and Observers*. 2021; United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *IOM Regional Offices*. 2026.

⁴ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *IOM Strategic Plan 2024–2028*. 2024.

⁵ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Annual Report for 2016 (C/108/4)*. 2017. p. 4.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Abridged Annual Report 2020*. 2020; United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *International Migration*. N.d.

⁸ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Abridged Annual Report 2020*. 2020. pp. 4-5.

⁹ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Constitution*. 2013. p. 6.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Migration Governance Framework*. 2020.



- IOM **will generally**: provide recommendations to Member States, other United Nations agencies, international entities, and stakeholders on migration matters; initiate research and foster international cooperation across various sectors, such as economic development, social inclusion, cultural exchange, education, health, as well as the protection of human rights and freedoms for migrants; request or consider reports from other entities within the United Nations system and collaborate with specialized agencies; establish observance days, convene expert panels or commissions, develop frameworks for treaty negotiations, or direct issues to relevant judicial or policy-making bodies, as needed.¹²
- IOM **will not generally**: prescribe detailed directives for the implementation of its recommendations, leaving the Member States and relevant bodies the discretion to define specific operational strategies; establish new entities, unless there is a widespread international consensus on the need to consolidate existing efforts or when a new concept and its operational mandate have been thoroughly negotiated and defined; intervene in matters that fall directly under the purview of other United Nations bodies, such as the Security Council, unless specifically requested or in collaboration with these entities.¹³

IOM's Migration Governance Framework outlines principles and objectives for supporting Member States in meeting international standards, enhancing migration understanding through data analysis, and fostering partnerships for comprehensive solutions.¹⁴ IOM's objectives focus on promoting the well-being of migrants and their societal integration, combating human trafficking and exploitation, and ensuring migration occurs in a secure and dignified manner.¹⁵ Through collaboration with Member States, IOM provides advice, technical support, and operational assistance, leveraging its extensive knowledge and capacity to advocate for an integrated government approach to migration.¹⁶

Governance, Funding and Structure

IOM operates with a structured governance comprising two main bodies: the Council and the Administration.¹⁷ The Administration includes the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General, and staff.¹⁸ The Council, which consists of a representative from each of the 174 Member States and 8 observer states, meets annually to set the organization's policies, programs, and budget, while also overseeing the activities of the Director-General and subsidiary bodies.¹⁹ The Director-General and Deputy Directors-General are elected for five-year terms by a two-thirds majority of the Council.²⁰ The Administration is tasked with managing IOM's administrative and executive functions, supported by the Office of the Director-General for policy development and organizational oversight.²¹

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Migration Governance Framework*. 2020.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *IOM Strategic Plan 2024–2028*. 2024.

¹⁷ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Constitution*. 2013. p. 10.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Members and Observers*. 2026.

²⁰ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Organizational Structure*. 2021.

²¹ Ibid.



IOM's operational framework is designed to be decentralized, empowering its global network of regional and country offices to tailor and implement diverse, locally focused projects based on specific regional needs and contexts.²² It is funded by voluntary contributions from Member States, grants, and donations, with an annual budget of approximately \$2.6 billion, aimed at addressing global migration challenges through culturally sensitive and region-specific strategies.²³ IOM also conducts four-yearly reviews of the GCM, the next of which will take place in 2026.²⁴ IOM operates globally through a strategic network of six Regional Offices in Egypt, Thailand, Panama, Senegal, Kenya, and Austria.²⁵ Additionally, it has specialized offices, like the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre in Germany and the African Capacity Building Centre in Tanzania.²⁶ IOM fosters collaboration with a wide array of stakeholders, including over 60 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, to discuss migration issues through forums, like the International Dialogue on Migration, emphasizing IOM's commitment to working with many stakeholders through global dialogue on migration solutions.²⁷

²² United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Abridged Annual Report 2020*. 2020.

²³ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *IOM Global Appeal 2026*. 2026; United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Programme and Budget for 2026*. 2026.

²⁴ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *International Dialogue on Migration 2025*. 2025.

²⁵ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *IOM Regional Offices*. 2026.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Civil Society & NGOs*. 2021.



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United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *IOM Global Appeal 2026*. 2026. Retrieved 3 May 2026 from: <https://www.iom.int/msite/global-appeal-2026/>

United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *IOM History*. 2026. Retrieved 3 May 2026 from: <https://www.iom.int/iom-history>

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<https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/116/c-116-7-programme-and-budget-for-2026.pdf>

United Nations, International Organization for Migration. *Regional Offices*. 2026 Retrieved 16 February 2026 from: <https://www.iom.int/where-we-work>



1. Facilitating Pathways for Regular Migration

"The evidence shows overwhelmingly that long-term, regular pathways will better protect migrant rights, they will better enable governments to plan for and manage movements in an orderly way, and they will support economic development in the countries that the migrants are coming from, as well as the countries that migrants are going to."²⁸

Introduction

IOM estimates that a minimum of 7,667 people globally died or disappeared while migrating in 2025.²⁹ With more than 304 million people migrating in 2025, IOM reports that additional deaths and disappearances likely remain unreported due to inadequate data on irregular migration.³⁰ When safe and regular migration pathways are unavailable, migrants are forced onto dangerous routes, such as desert crossings or precarious sea passages.³¹ For people moving away from their place of residence, irregular pathways can lead to higher risks of exploitation, violence, and abuse.³² Migration pathways refer to the programs, mechanisms, or illicit methods that allow people to migrate.³³ Regular pathways for safe, orderly, and legal migration reduce migrants' risks of unsafe passage and exploitation, thus promoting the protection of their human rights.³⁴

Migrants from vulnerable populations are more likely to migrate irregularly because of the additional administrative and socioeconomic barriers they face in accessing regular pathways.³⁵ Although there is no internationally accepted definition, vulnerability in the context of migration is understood as the risk of human rights violations, discrimination, and inequality associated with a person's migration status.³⁶ For example, labor migrants traveling through irregular pathways are more likely to experience poor working conditions and workplace discrimination because they lack the same legal status and social protection provided to permanent residents.³⁷ Personal characteristics, including sex, age, and health, can

²⁸ Pope. International Organization for Migration. *Statement by the Director-General Amy Pope to the 114th Session of the IOM Council*. 2023. p. 5.

²⁹ International Organization for Migration. *21 Migrants Died Every Day in 2025, New IOM Data Reveals*. 2026.

³⁰ International Organization for Migration, Global Migration Data Analysis Centre. *Total number of international migrants at mid-year 2024*. 2025; International Organization for Migration. *2024 is Deadliest Year on Record for Migrants, New IOM Data Reveals*. 2025.

³¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration: Report of the Secretary-General (A/80/632)*. 2026. p. 6; International Organization for Migration. *2024 is Deadliest Year on Record for Migrants, New IOM Data Reveals*. 2025; International Organization for Migration. *Fatal Journeys: Tracking Lives Lost during Migration*. 2014. p. 111.

³² International Organization for Migration. *Drivers of international migration*. 2026. p. 132; United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/590)*. 2024. p. 2.

³³ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. p. 6.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 2.

³⁵ Ibid. pp. 4, 10-11.

³⁶ Ibid. p. 4; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights et al. *Principles and Guidelines, supported by practical guidance on the Human Rights Protection of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations*. 2018. pp. 5-6.

³⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum (A/RES/76/266)*. 2022. p. 5.



exacerbate situational factors, increasing migrants' risks.³⁸ Therefore, certain migrant groups are at greater risk of vulnerability, including women, children, and refugees, which are defined as people who cannot or will not return to their country of origin due to fear of persecution.³⁹ Barriers to regular pathways encountered by these vulnerable populations include a lack of information on migration, lack of decent work, and administrative obstacles.⁴⁰ In line with the *IOM Strategic Plan, 2024-2028* (2024), IOM's work focuses on addressing these barriers to promote safe, orderly, and regular migration that protects migrants' human rights.⁴¹

International and Regional Framework

IOM's work and existing international frameworks on migration are guided by international human rights law.⁴² The rights to freedom of movement and to seek asylum from persecution were affirmed in Articles 13 and 14 of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (1948), regardless of migration status.⁴³ Regular migration pathways ensure these human rights can be exercised by providing safe and legal means to do so, as opposed to irregular and unsafe migration.⁴⁴ The 2030 Agenda, adopted through General Assembly resolution 70/1, 10 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) directly connect to migration policy and the challenges faced by migrants.⁴⁵ For example, SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) relates to migration because inequality is often a driver of migration, especially irregular migration.⁴⁶ Specifically, SDG target 10.7 aims to facilitate regular migration through ethical recruitment, expanded access to healthcare for migrants, and combatting human trafficking.⁴⁷

The work of ILO, a specialized agency of the United Nations, focuses on promoting labor rights and standards for the treatment of migrant workers, which are recognized by Member States through legally binding ILO conventions.⁴⁸ For example, *ILO Convention (No. 143) concerning migrations in abusive conditions and the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment of migrant workers* (ILO Convention

³⁸ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. p. 4.

³⁹ Ibid. p. 5; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women on the move: FAQs on migration and gender*. 2025; United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons. *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*. 1951. pp. 14-15.

⁴⁰ International Organization for Migration. *Irregular Migration and Identity: More than Just Documents*. N.d.; International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024*. 2024. pp. 192-193.

⁴¹ International Organization for Migration. *Migration Governance Framework*. 2016. pp. 3-4; International Organization for Migration. *IOM Strategic Plan, 2024-2028*. 2024. pp. 20, 30.

⁴² International Organization for Migration, Migrant Protection Platform. *IOM's Approach to Protection*. 2023. pp. 2-3.

⁴³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948. p. 4.

⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 2.

⁴⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015; International Organization for Migration. *Migration Data and the Sustainable Development Goals*. N.d.

⁴⁶ International Organization for Migration. *Reducing global inequalities*. 2026.

⁴⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 21; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *SDG Indicator Metadata, SDG 10.7*. 2021. pp. 3-4.

⁴⁸ International Labour Organization. *International Labour Organization - The UN agency for the world of work*. N.d. p. 1; International Labour Organization. *International labour standards and labour migration*. 2026.



no. 143) (1975) mandates that states prevent the exploitation of migrant workers, who often travel through irregular pathways.⁴⁹ Adopted through General Assembly resolution 45/158, the *International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (1990) expands on ILO Convention no. 143 by establishing additional standards for the protection of migrant workers, including the prohibition of arbitrary expulsion and the rights to employment, medical care, and social security.⁵⁰

Adopted through General Assembly resolution 73/195, the GCM is a non-legally binding framework that recognizes the need for international cooperation to address migration issues and outlines 23 objectives for the achievement of safe, orderly, and regular migration.⁵¹ According to IOM, the GCM advanced the migration priorities described in the New York Declaration by establishing the first comprehensive international framework on migration.⁵² The New York Declaration reaffirmed that all migrants are entitled to human rights and endorsed pathways for regular migration.⁵³ Within the GCM, objective 5 (regular pathways) calls for improvements in the availability and flexibility of regular pathways.⁵⁴ Objective 7 (reduce vulnerabilities) aims to advance the development of migration policies and pathways that protect vulnerable migrants, who are more likely to travel irregularly.⁵⁵

As geography is a major driver of migration, regional cooperation allows for effective migration management.⁵⁶ In 2020, IOM expressed its support for the European Commission's *New Pact on Migration and Asylum* (New Pact) (2020), which commits European Union (EU) Member States to collaborate on addressing migration issues.⁵⁷ Having entered into effect in June 2026, the New Pact establishes a shared system for migration management throughout the EU and enhances responsibility sharing among refugee host countries.⁵⁸ In the Caribbean region, IOM supports the Caribbean

⁴⁹ International Labour Organization. *Convention (No. 143) concerning migrations in abusive conditions and the promotion of equality of opportunity and treatment of migrant workers*. 1978. p. 5; Triandafyllidou et al. International Organization for Migration. *Exploring the Links Between Enhancing Regular Pathways and Discouraging Irregular Migration: A discussion paper to inform future policy deliberations*. 2019. pp. 17-18.

⁵⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/RES/45/158)*. 1990; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Background to the Convention: Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families*. N.d.

⁵¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195)*. 2018. pp. 5-6.

⁵² International Organization for Migration, Office at the United Nations. *The Global Compact for Migration*. N.d.; International Organization for Migration. *Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration*. N.d.

⁵³ United Nations, General Assembly. *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*. 2016. pp. 2, 11.

⁵⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195)*. 2018. pp. 12-13.

⁵⁵ Ibid. pp. 15-17; United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 4, 10-11.

⁵⁶ International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024*. 2024. p. 55; United Nations, General Assembly. *International migration and development (A/RES/79/217)*. 2024. p. 6.

⁵⁷ International Organization for Migration. *IOM Welcomes, Pledges Support to New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum*. 2024; European Union, European Commission. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum*. 2020. pp. 4-5, 7-9.

⁵⁸ Government of Sweden, Swedish Migration Agency. *What is the new EU migration and asylum pact about?*. 2025; European Union, European Commission. *Communication from the Commission to the*



Community's (CARICOM's) development of its *Regional Approach for a Migration Policy* (RAMP), which will serve as a comprehensive policy framework establishing common priorities for migration governance.⁵⁹ In line with RAMP's objective of expanding pathways for migrant workers within the CARICOM region, free labor mobility between Barbados, Belize, Dominica, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines began in 2025.⁶⁰

Role of the International System

IOM's work is guided by three primary objectives outlined in the IOM Strategic Plan, which include protecting migrants, supporting communities facing involuntary displacement, and facilitating pathways for regular migration.⁶¹ Objective 3 of the IOM Strategic Plan aims to reduce irregular migration through the development and expansion of regular pathways.⁶² IOM's report *Migration Governance Insights: Data-driven Perspectives to Enhance Labour Migration Pathways* (2025) provides guidance on facilitating regular pathways for labor migrants specifically, including incorporating the perspectives of trade unions and employers in the development of pathways.⁶³ Additionally, IOM recommends establishing cohesion between national and regional migration policies and ensuring pathways are responsive to changing migrant needs.⁶⁴ To accomplish the IOM Strategic Plan, IOM emphasizes the importance of partnerships with NGOs, the private sector, and United Nations agencies and bodies.⁶⁵

The GCM affirmed that addressing migration issues, including the establishment of regular migration pathways, requires regional cooperation among Member States.⁶⁶ The IOM Strategic Plan committed to promoting regional cooperation on migration through inter-state consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCMs), which are regional information sharing and policy dialogues related to migration.⁶⁷ By providing informal environments for discussion, ISCMs influence policy by enhancing regional coordination on migration management.⁶⁸ Additionally, regional bodies facilitate regular pathways by establishing migration policy frameworks, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)'s *Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers* (2018), which calls for cooperation

European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum. 2020. pp. 4-5, 7-9.

⁵⁹ Global Forum on Migration and Development. *Regional Approach for a Migration Policy (RAMP) for CARICOM.* 2025.

⁶⁰ Government of Belize, Press Office. *Four CARICOM Countries to Launch Full Free Movement.* 2025; Caribbean Community. *CARICOM Labour Ministers Discuss Free Movement, Other Regional Priorities.* 2026.

⁶¹ International Organization for Migration. *IOM Strategic Plan, 2024-2028.* 2024. p. 10.

⁶² Ibid. p. 20.

⁶³ International Organization for Migration. *Migration Governance Insights: Data-driven Perspectives to Enhance Labour Migration Pathways.* 2025. p. 43.

⁶⁴ International Organization for Migration. *Migration Governance Insights on Regular Pathways: Delivering on the Promise of Migration.* 2024. p. 45.

⁶⁵ International Organization for Migration. *IOM Strategic Plan, 2024-2028.* 2024. p. 26.

⁶⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195).* 2018. p. 5.

⁶⁷ International Organization for Migration. *IOM Strategic Plan, 2024-2028.* 2024. p. 20; International Organization for Migration. *Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration.* N.d.

⁶⁸ International Organization for Migration. *The role of inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.* 2019. pp. 1, 3-4.



among ASEAN Member States to provide accessible work opportunities for migrants and expand information sharing for the enforcement of migration law.⁶⁹

The United Nations promotes the rights of migrants and refugees, including through the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UNHCR.⁷⁰ OHCHR's *Principles and Guidelines on the Protection of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations* (2017) outline 20 principles for developing migration pathways that ensure vulnerable people's human rights, such as the prohibition of arbitrary detention and an emphasis on the safety of migrant children.⁷¹ UNHCR's *Operational Guidance on Complementary Pathways* (2024) recommends establishing complementary migration pathways sensitive to challenges faced by refugees during migration, as well as ensuring that refugees' perspectives are prioritized in the design and monitoring of these pathways.⁷²

IOM, OHCHR, UNHCR, and ILO are members of the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM), which coordinates the work of agencies, governments, and the private sector to efficiently facilitate the establishment of regular migration pathways and the implementation of the GCM.⁷³ To promote this coordination, UNNM manages several workstreams through which member agencies develop migration policy recommendations.⁷⁴ For example, IOM co-leads a workstream on enhancing cooperation on migrant disappearances and addressing the humanitarian needs of migrants.⁷⁵ The recommendations of this workstream were shared in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the GCM (A/79/590) (2024), including guidelines on preventing disappearances, coordinating search and rescue efforts, and systematizing the collection of anonymized data on migrant disappearances.⁷⁶ Additionally, the UNNM supports the General Assembly in hosting the quadrennial International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), which acts as the primary global forum for discussing progress towards the implementation of the GCM.⁷⁷ At the 2026 IMRF, Member States recognized administrative costs and excessive documentation requirements as barriers limiting migrants' access to regular pathways and public services, such as healthcare and education.⁷⁸ To further facilitate regular pathways, UNNM provides reviews of regional migration frameworks every four years.⁷⁹ These reviews ensure

⁶⁹ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers*. 2018. pp. 5, 24, 26.

⁷⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *OHCHR and Migration*. N.d.; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Complementary pathways for admission to third countries*. 2026.

⁷¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights et al. *Principles and Guidelines, supported by practical guidance on the Human Rights Protection of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations*. 2018. pp. 37, 42.

⁷² Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Operational Guidelines on Complementary Pathways (UNHCR/OG/2024/06)*. 2024. pp. 2, 11, 20, 22-23; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Complementary pathways for admission to third countries*. 2026.

⁷³ United Nations Network on Migration. *About Us*. 2023; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Secretary-General's remarks on UN Network on Migration [as delivered]*. 2018.

⁷⁴ United Nations Network on Migration. *Workstreams*. N.d.

⁷⁵ United Nations Network on Migration. *Actionable recommendations on missing migrants and providing humanitarian assistance to migrants in distress*. N.d.

⁷⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/590)*. 2024. pp. 2, 23-25.

⁷⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *About the Forum*. N.d.

⁷⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum (A/RES/80/258)*. 2026. pp. 3-4, 7-8, 10.

⁷⁹ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regional Reviews: State-led Discussion about GCM Implementation*. 2024.



accountability among Member States by recognizing gaps related to the objectives of the GCM at national and regional levels.⁸⁰ Gaps identified in the most recent reviews conducted in 2024 included increased migrant vulnerability due to persistently limited access to the legal system and social protection schemes.⁸¹

More than 60 NGOs hold observer status in IOM, in line with the GCM's multi-stakeholder approach to addressing migration issues.⁸² As an observer in IOM, Amnesty International supports community sponsorships, which allow private citizens of destination countries to sponsor migrants.⁸³ Through these sponsorships, participants provide migrants with funds, social connections, and information related to the language and culture of their destination country.⁸⁴ Through dialogue, collaboration, and the sharing of best practices with NGOs, IOM promotes the development of regular pathways, such as Amnesty International's community sponsorships.⁸⁵

Reducing Barriers to Regular Migration for Women and Girls

Due to their gender and migration status, migrant women and girls represent a vulnerable population facing elevated risks of exploitation and violence.⁸⁶ Frequently, women and girls' access to legal protections, housing, healthcare, and employment is already limited by gender inequality and patriarchal norms.⁸⁷ This inequality creates barriers that reduce women's access to regular pathways, increasing the prevalence of irregular migration among women.⁸⁸ Women often lack information on available regular migration processes because, according to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the majority of people globally without Internet access in 2025 are women and girls facing poverty.⁸⁹ Without access to regular pathways that protect their human rights and ensure their legal protection, migrant women with irregular statuses are more susceptible to human rights violations, discrimination, and vulnerability.⁹⁰

⁸⁰ Ibid; United Nations Network on Migration. *Framework on the preparation and organization of the Regional Reviews of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration*. 2023.

⁸¹ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. *Report: Second Regional Review Conference of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Arab Region - Multi-stakeholder consultation*. 2024. p. 4; United Nations Network on Migration. *Second Regional Review of the Global Compact for Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean*. 2025. p. 22.

⁸² United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195)*. 2018. p. 6; International Organization for Migration. *Civil society and NGOs with observer status*. N.d.

⁸³ International Organization for Migration. *Civil society and NGOs with observer status*. N.d.; Amnesty International. *Welcoming Refugees Through Community Sponsorship*. N.d.

⁸⁴ Amnesty International. *Welcoming Refugees Through Community Sponsorship*. N.d.

⁸⁵ International Organization for Migration. *Civil Society and NGOs*. N.d.

⁸⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women on the move: FAQs on migration and gender*. 2025.

⁸⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Migrants: Protect Not Marginalize*. N.d.

⁸⁸ Ibid; United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 10-11.

⁸⁹ International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024*. 2024. pp. 192-193; International Telecommunication Union. *Global number of Internet users increases, but disparities deepen key digital divides*. 2025.

⁹⁰ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 2, 4, 6.



Additionally, women are more likely to experience human trafficking than other migrant groups.⁹¹ Considering women and girls' increased likelihood of facing barriers to regular pathways, Member States called for the implementation of policies that respect the rights of migrant women in objective 7 of the GCM.⁹²

Existing frameworks and initiatives are inadequate to fully address the obstacles limiting migrant women and girls' access to regular pathways.⁹³ Gender discrimination and inequality limit migrant women's opportunities for accessible employment that provides a livable income.⁹⁴ Therefore, migrant women more often work in unregulated and low-wage industries, such as domestic work and healthcare.⁹⁵ In these unregulated industries, workers frequently lack access to legal and social protections.⁹⁶ To address this barrier to regular migration, ILO partnered with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) to promote decent work for migrant women in the Asia-Pacific region through the Safe and Fair regional program.⁹⁷ From 2018 to 2023, this program provided technical support for the development of 131 legal instruments addressing violence and discrimination faced by migrant women workers and developed a mobile app providing migrant women access to information and public services.⁹⁸

According to IOM, reducing barriers to regular pathways for women and girls includes establishing new and expanding access to existing migration schemes, such as labor mobility, family reunification, and complementary pathways.⁹⁹ IOM highlights regularization as an example of a regular pathway accessible to migrant women, as it facilitates recognizing irregular migrants as legal residents.¹⁰⁰ Regularization schemes may also target specific industries that often employ migrant women, such as domestic work

⁹¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Migrant women at risk of violence and exploitation*. 2025; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Policy Brief No. 4: Making Gender-Responsive Migration Laws*. 2017. pp. 4-5.

⁹² United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195)*. 2018. pp. 5-6, 15; United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 10-11.

⁹³ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 10-11; International Organization for Migration. *Global Compact Thematic Paper: Protection of Human Rights*. 2017. p. 1.

⁹⁴ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 10-11; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all*. N.d.; United Nations Children's Fund. *Uncertain Pathways: How gender shapes the experience of children on the move*. 2021. p. 11.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women et al. *Addressing the Trafficking of Women Migrant Workers in Poorly Regulated Sectors*. 2025. p. 3; United Nations Children's Fund. *Uncertain Pathways: How gender shapes the experience of children on the move*. 2021. p. 11.

⁹⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region*. N.d.

⁹⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Safe and Fair Regional Programme Results*. 2024. pp. 2-3; Yalirozy. Cambodian Media Broadcasting Corporation. *My Journey Mobile App Aims to Make Migrant Work Safer for Cambodia Women*. 2021.

⁹⁹ International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024*. 2024. p. 193.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid; United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 6-7.



and healthcare.¹⁰¹ To further support women and girls, IOM calls for improved access to information on women's legal rights during migration and available migration pathways.¹⁰² To achieve these goals, ILO operates Migrant Worker Resource Centers (MRCs), which empower migrant women through pre-departure orientation and personalized counseling.¹⁰³ These services provided by MRCs increase awareness of regular pathways, reducing migrant women's likelihood of experiencing irregular migration.¹⁰⁴ Addressing this barrier to access, as well as promoting decent work, increases the use of regular migration pathways among women and girls.¹⁰⁵

Establishing Regular Pathways for Labor Migration

Labor migrants who travel through irregular pathways lack legal status and protections, presenting risks that include poor working conditions, wage theft, inadequate social protection, and workplace discrimination.¹⁰⁶ By granting legal recognition and worker protections, regular pathways protect the human rights of people migrating to seek employment.¹⁰⁷ Within the GCM, objective 5 recognizes the need for regular migration pathways that facilitate decent work and labor mobility.¹⁰⁸ According to IOM, regular pathways for labor migration ensure migrants' rights and contribute to economic development by allowing labor markets to respond to the effects of climate change and emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence.¹⁰⁹ For example, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) determined that migrant workers' contributions in Chile accounted for 11.5% of the country's \$63.3 billion economic growth between 2009 and 2017.¹¹⁰

Recruitment fees and lengthy permit processing times limit access to regular pathways for labor migrants.¹¹¹ Expenses incurred to secure employment in a destination country may be paid by migrants to third-party labor recruiters, government agencies, or employers.¹¹² For example, migrants may pay

¹⁰¹ International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024*. 2024. p. 193; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women et al. *Addressing the Trafficking of Women Migrant Workers in Poorly Regulated Sectors*. 2025. p. 3.

¹⁰² International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024*. 2024. p. 192.

¹⁰³ Ibid; International Labour Organization. *ILO Guidance Note on Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs)*. 2024. p. 1.

¹⁰⁴ International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024*. 2024. p. 192.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women on the move: FAQs on migration and gender*. 2025.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum (A/RES/76/266)*. 2022. p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 8-9.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195)*. 2018. pp. 12-13.

¹⁰⁹ International Organization for Migration. *Migration and the Green & Just Transition: Migrant Workers and Labour Market Demands*. 2023. p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Escobar. International Organization for Migration. *Five Contributions of Migrants to the Growth of Latin American Economies*. 2023; Cano Christiny et al. United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. *Contributions of international migration to development in Latin America and the Caribbean: good practices, challenges and recommendations*. 2023. p. 17.

¹¹¹ International Labour Organization. *Recruitment fees and related costs at a glance*. 2024. p. 4; International Organization for Migration. *Skills Mobility Partnerships: Recommendations and Guidance for Policymakers and Practitioners*. 2023. p. 67; International Organization for Migration. *Irregular Migration and Identity: More than Just Documents*. N.d.

¹¹² International Labour Organization. *Recruitment fees and related costs at a glance*. 2024. pp. 3-4.



application or processing fees to governments for residency, work authorization, or identity verification documentation.¹¹³ These costs can discourage regular migration among workers with irregular statuses, as these migrants are more likely to face poverty and struggle to pay additional costs.¹¹⁴ In addition to recruitment fees, lengthy permit processing times present another barrier to regular migration that incentivizes irregular pathways.¹¹⁵ According to IOM, if adequate training is provided to ensure equal access, the digitalization of residency and work authorization processes can reduce wait times and improve the availability of regular pathways among migrants.¹¹⁶

A consequence of complex or costly migration processes is that they can push labor migrants to seek assistance from third parties, who may financially exploit these workers.¹¹⁷ Recruitment fees may include legitimate expenses associated with hiring migrants, such as medical, training, or travel expenses.¹¹⁸ However, in other cases, recruiters or employers exploit irregular migrants by including illegal or undisclosed costs in recruitment fees.¹¹⁹ ILO reports that illegitimate recruitment fees can result in debt bondage, under which migrants are forced to either work against their will or to accept poor working conditions to repay a debt.¹²⁰ Globally, ILO estimates that 20% of people who experienced forced labor in 2022 also experienced debt bondage.¹²¹ Therefore, exploitative recruitment fees may lead to a higher risk of forced labor and poor working conditions among migrants.¹²² To address the dangers associated with illegitimate recruitment fees and complex administrative processes, ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative (FRI) promotes ethical recruitment through regular pathways by funding academic research, engaging in policy advocacy, and advocating for fair business practices and worker protections.¹²³ Since 2014, ILO has worked with more than 25 countries to align national policies with the principles of the FRI, promoting transparency in recruitment fees, work authorization processes, and other labor regulations that impact migrants.¹²⁴ FRI assisted the government of Madagascar between 2019 and 2022 in amending its national labor laws to align with ILO standards, including simplifying the exit visa application process for migrant workers and strengthening regulations on private employment brokers.¹²⁵

¹¹³ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. p. 11.

¹¹⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Leverage Regular Migration Pathways for Human Rights*. 2025. p. 14.

¹¹⁵ International Organization for Migration. *Skills Mobility Partnerships: Recommendations and Guidance for Policymakers and Practitioners*. 2023. p. 67.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. p. 66; International Organization for Migration. *Bridging the Digital Divide: Assessment of the Digital Skills of Migrant Workers and the Perspective of Employers in Thailand*. 2023. p. 12; International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2022*. 2022. p. 296.

¹¹⁷ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. p. 11.

¹¹⁸ International Labour Organization. *Recruitment fees and related costs at a glance*. 2024. p. 3.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ International Labour Organization et al. *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage*. 2022. p. 43.

¹²¹ Ibid. p. 44.

¹²² International Labour Organization. *Recruitment fees and related costs at a glance*. 2024. p. 4.

¹²³ International Labour Organization. *Fair Recruitment Initiative*. 2026; International Labour Organization. *Fair Recruitment Initiative Strategy 2026-2030: The way forward, from policy to practice*. 2025. pp. 6, 9.

¹²⁴ International Labour Organization. *Fair Recruitment Initiative Strategy 2026-2030: The way forward, from policy to practice*. 2025. p. 2.

¹²⁵ International Labor Organization. *Madagascar alignment of labour code to newly ratified conventions*. 2022. pp. 2-3.



To establish regular pathways for migrant workers, Member States have increasingly entered into legally binding bilateral labor migration agreements (BLMAs) that establish cooperation on labor migration between two states.¹²⁶ Under a BLMA, participating states may facilitate migration by simplifying administrative processes, improving skills recognition, or sharing information on labor market needs and migration trends.¹²⁷ BLMAs increase regular migration flows from an origin to a destination country by up to 76% in the ten years after an agreement is signed, according to research published by the World Bank.¹²⁸ According to IOM, a reason for the recent proliferation of BLMAs is the growing demand for temporary migration arrangements to address labor shortages in the healthcare sector.¹²⁹ Through a workstream co-led by IOM and ILO, UNNM developed its *Guidance on Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements* (2022), which contains operational guidelines for the creation of BLMAs, including procedures for drafting these agreements and recommendations on what targets to track to ensure their implementation.¹³⁰

According to IOM, labor migration pathways are most effective when they are sensitive to the specific labor market needs of each Member State.¹³¹ Considering IOM's recommendation, participating Member States at the 2022 IMRF recognized a lack of comprehensive bilateral skills recognition as a limitation on the availability and flexibility of regular pathways.¹³² Skills recognition programs facilitate migration by allowing qualifications, such as technical training certificates or university degrees, to be transferable between countries.¹³³ Through skills-based mobility partnerships (SMPs), Member States address this challenge by jointly investing in transferable skills training that addresses the labor market needs of both origin and destination countries.¹³⁴ SMPs complement existing national migration policies by providing new employment opportunities for migrants in destination countries, expanding the availability of regular pathways for labor migrants.¹³⁵ In *Skills Mobility Partnerships: Recommendations and Guidance for Policymakers and Practitioners* (2023), IOM recommends that Member States incorporate bilateral skills recognition agreements when developing SMPs to further reduce barriers to regular pathways faced by labor migrants.¹³⁶ According to IOM, the accessibility of regular labor migration can be further improved by simplifying administrative processes for obtaining residency and work authorization through SMPs.¹³⁷

¹²⁶ International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2024*. 2024. p. 178.

¹²⁷ International Organization for Migration. *Bilateral labour migration arrangements in two Southern African Development Community corridors*. 2021. p. 3.

¹²⁸ Adhikari et al. World Bank Group. *Do Bilateral Labor Agreements Increase Migration? Global Evidence from 1960 to 2020*. 2024. p. 4.

¹²⁹ Yeates et al. International Organization for Migration. *Temporary labour migration: Two studies on workers' perspectives and actions*. 2021. p. 21.

¹³⁰ United Nations Network on Migration. *Enhancing pathways for regular migration through bilateral labour migration agreements*. N.d.; United Nations Network on Migration. *Guidance on Bilateral Labor Migration Agreements*. 2022. pp. 37-39, 50-54.

¹³¹ International Organization for Migration. *International Dialogue on Migration No. 37 – Facilitating Regular Pathways to a Better Future: Harnessing the Power of Migration*. 2024. p. 37.

¹³² United Nations, General Assembly. *Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum (A/RES/76/266)*. 2022. pp. 4-5.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ International Organization for Migration. *Skills Mobility Partnerships*. N.d. p. 2.

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 1; International Organization for Migration. *Skills Mobility Partnerships: Recommendations and Guidance for Policymakers and Practitioners*. 2023. p. 61.

¹³⁶ International Organization for Migration. *Skills Mobility Partnerships: Recommendations and Guidance for Policymakers and Practitioners*. 2023. p. 42.

¹³⁷ Ibid. pp. 61, 66-67.



Conclusion

Access to safe, orderly, and regular migration pathways reduces migrants' risks of human rights violations, discrimination, exploitation, and death or disappearance during travel.¹³⁸ Vulnerable migrant groups, such as women and girls, are more likely to travel through irregular pathways and face elevated risks.¹³⁹ Women and girls' access to regular pathways is impacted by unequal access to decent work, as well as limited access to information on migration processes.¹⁴⁰ For labor migrants, risks associated with irregular migration are exacerbated due to a lack of access to legal justice and social protection.¹⁴¹ According to IOM, BLMAs and SMPs are examples of regular pathways that protect labor migrants' rights and promote sustainable economic development.¹⁴² Although existing international frameworks affirm migrants' human rights, the implementation of these frameworks remains a challenge.¹⁴³ In the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the GCM (A/80/632) (2026), Member States were urged to expedite the realization of the GCM's objectives by establishing, expanding, and enhancing pathways for regular migration.¹⁴⁴ Following the Secretary-General's appeal, the *Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum* (2026) called for international cooperation in facilitating pathways for regular migration that protect human rights, prioritize safety, and reduce vulnerabilities experienced by migrants.¹⁴⁵

Further Research

As delegates research and develop solutions to facilitate pathways for regular migration, they should consider: What funding options exist for facilitating pathways for regular migration? How is women and girls' access to regular pathways limited by xenophobia, sexism, and racism? How can complementary pathways be improved to address challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers? What types of pathways for regular migration address the needs of labor migrants? What were the recommendations, priorities, and conclusions related to facilitating pathways for regular migration identified at the most recent IMRF, hosted in May 2026?

¹³⁸ International Organization for Migration. *2024 is Deadliest Year on Record for Migrants, New IOM Data Reveals*. 2025; United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 2, 4.

¹³⁹ United Nations Network on Migration. *Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability*. 2021. pp. 2, 4, 6, 10-11.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. pp. 10-11.

¹⁴¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum (A/RES/76/266)*. 2022. p. 5.

¹⁴² International Organization for Migration. *Migration and the Green & Just Transition: Migrant Workers and Labour Market Demands*. 2023. p. 1; International Organization for Migration. *Guidance on Bilateral labour migration agreements*. 2022; International Organization for Migration. *Skills Mobility Partnerships*. N.d. p. 2.

¹⁴³ International Organization for Migration. *Global Compact Thematic Paper: Protection of Human Rights*. 2017. p. 1.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration: Report of the Secretary-General (A/80/632)*. 2026. p. 17.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum (A/RES/80/258)*. 2026. pp. 2, 3-5, 7-8.



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2. Supporting Safe and Dignified Return, and Sustainable Reintegration

*"To meaningfully engage youth in SALW control policy and decision-making processes, we must first recognize their potential as agents of change."*¹⁴⁶

Introduction

According to UNHCR's *Mid-Year Trends Report 2025*, 117.3 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide at the end of June 2025, representing an 8% decrease from 2024 levels.¹⁴⁷ During the first half of 2025, approximately 6.9 million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) were able to return to their homes.¹⁴⁸ IOM defines IDPs as individuals who are forced to leave their homes due to disaster, conflict, or human rights violations but remain within the borders of their home country.¹⁴⁹ For individuals who have been displaced, IOM defines safe and dignified return as a mechanism that allows migrants to return to their country of origin while safeguarding their rights and maintaining their dignity.¹⁵⁰ Refugees are defined in the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951 Refugee Convention) as people who have left their country of origin due to the threat of persecution or harm for reasons including, but not limited to, racial background, national origin, or religious belief.¹⁵¹ The *Serving and Protecting Together: IOM/UNHCR Framework of Engagement*, developed by IOM and UNHCR in 2022, underlines that refugees and individuals in need of protection under international law fall under the UNHCR mandate.¹⁵² IOM reemphasizes its commitment to aid UNHCR in upholding its mandate, working alongside the organization, while UNHCR recognises IOM's continued leadership in supporting migrants.¹⁵³

IOM is the leading global body on migration and presents an integrated approach for the return and reintegration of migrants on an individual and community-based level.¹⁵⁴ IOM assisted over 71,000 migrants in 2023, as reported in *Return and Reintegration Key Highlights - Executive Summary* (2023).¹⁵⁵ IOM defines a migrant as an individual who has moved away from their place of living, whether across borders or within their country of origin, to a different area, regardless of the reasoning and of whether or not the move was forced or voluntary.¹⁵⁶ In accordance with IOM's *Policy on the Full Spectrum of Return, Readmission and Reintegration*, which was released in 2021, reintegration can only be considered sustainable when returnees can financially support themselves, have stable mental and emotional

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. *How can we meaningfully involve youth in Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) control policy/decision-making processes?*. 2024. p. 53.

¹⁴⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Mid-Year Trends 2025*. 2025. p. 5.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ International Organization for Migration. *Key Migration Terms*. 2018.

¹⁵⁰ International Organization for Migration. *Safe, dignified and rights-based return and reintegration*. 2026.

¹⁵¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Promoting Development Approaches to Migration and Displacement*. 2019. p. 2.

¹⁵² International Organization for Migration et al. *Serving and Protecting Together: IOM/UNHCR Framework of Engagement*. 2022. pp. 1-2.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ International Organization for Migration. *IOM's Policy on the Full Spectrum of Return, Readmission and Reintegration*. 2021.

¹⁵⁵ International Organization for Migration. *Return and Reintegration Key Highlights 2023: Executive Summary*. 2024. p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Migrants*. 2026.



standing, and feel accepted within their communities.¹⁵⁷ Once a returnee achieves sustainable reintegration, they should be able to decide if and when to migrate again, rather than feeling driven to do so during difficult circumstances.¹⁵⁸

International and Regional Framework

Supporting safe, dignified return and sustainable reintegration is grounded in many established international frameworks, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and the *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1967 Protocol) (1967).¹⁵⁹ The 1951 Refugee Convention was adopted by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons in December 1950, and the 1967 Protocol was later adopted by the General Assembly.¹⁶⁰ Specifically, Article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention is recognized as a principal form of protection for refugees, prohibiting their return to their home countries against their will in situations that might put their safety or rights at risk or in danger.¹⁶¹ The 1951 Refugee Convention has only been subject to one amendment, the 1967 Protocol.¹⁶² The 1967 Protocol removed any time or geographic limitations to ensure that the convention applies to and protects all individuals fleeing conflict and persecution, thereby strengthening its relevance to return and reintegration processes.¹⁶³

The 2030 Agenda highlights the challenges migrants face, emphasizing the need to protect their human rights while including migration in sustainable development efforts.¹⁶⁴ The 2030 Agenda established 17 SDGs relevant to sustainable return and migration, as exhibited through SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions).¹⁶⁵ Within these goals, relevant targets include 10.7 on facilitating "orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies," 16.2 on ending "abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children," and 16.3 on promoting "the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all."¹⁶⁶

The 2016 New York Declaration, adopted by General Assembly resolution 71/1, has a focus on the response to the large number of migrants and refugees globally, including issues related to return and reintegration.¹⁶⁷ Resolution 71/1 (2016) was adopted unanimously, reaffirming Member States' obligation to protect the rights of migrants and refugees.¹⁶⁸ The New York Declaration set a range of obligations to address the growing challenges displaced persons face, including the provision of resettlement

¹⁵⁷ International Organization for Migration. *IOM's Policy on the Full Spectrum of Return, Readmission and Reintegration*. 2021. p. 8.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *About UNHCR*. 2026.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *About UNHCR: The 1951 Refugee Convention*. 2026.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 8-9.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 14.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. pp. 21, 25-26.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. pp. 7-8.

¹⁶⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*. 2016.



opportunities, improving development assistance, preventing acts of violence against refugees, and outlining the responsibilities of Member States and other partners within the United Nations system regarding the protection of refugees, as well as supporting safe return and reintegration processes.¹⁶⁹ The GCM, adopted through General Assembly resolution 73/195 (2018), is a framework built on earlier United Nations agreements created to reinforce multilateral collaboration on migration.¹⁷⁰ The GCM highlights the importance of handling migration in a way that respects individuals' dignity, aligning with many global efforts like the 2030 Agenda.¹⁷¹ Objective 21 of the GCM, “cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration,” focuses on the commitment to ensure social inclusion, safety, and increased economic opportunities for displaced persons, thus supporting their ability to reintegrate effectively.¹⁷²

IOM's *Policy on the Full Spectrum of Return, Readmission and Reintegration*, adopted in 2021, guides the Organization in streamlining reintegration and return efforts.¹⁷³ According to this document, migration does not have a predictable progression; it is multifaceted and intricate.¹⁷⁴ It further states that increasing sustainable reintegration requires inclusive and multifaceted strategies that encompass multiple dimensions of socioeconomic and environmental determinants, requiring cooperation on the international level.¹⁷⁵ One of the main strategies this policy focuses on is interventions to improve the coordination of services for returnees and host countries and integrate reintegration into migration and development planning.¹⁷⁶

As reported by IOM in *Return and Reintegration Key Highlights*, published in 2023, assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programs remain an important component of migration management.¹⁷⁷ IOM-supported returns decreased by nearly 25% in 2023 when compared to 2022, and the report notes that this decrease may be attributed to changes in migration flows.¹⁷⁸ The report emphasized AVRR programs heavily, as they offer much support in the return and reintegration process.¹⁷⁹ As stated in IOM's Framework for AVRR (2018), IOM has implemented AVRR programs globally since 1979, promoting humane migration for the common good, building upon IOM's existing experience in implementing AVRR programs and existing migration policies.¹⁸⁰ This framework was intended to support host countries and returnees, encourage collaboration, and support sustainable reintegration.¹⁸¹ AVRR is an integral element of migration management, utilizing a holistic approach by considering not only the individual migrant

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195)*. 2019. pp. 1-3.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 2-5.

¹⁷² Ibid. pp. 30-31.

¹⁷³ International Organization for Migration. *IOM's Policy on the Full Spectrum of Return, Readmission and Reintegration*. 2021. p. 5.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 1-3.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 8.

¹⁷⁷ International Organization for Migration. *Return and Reintegration Key Highlights 2023: Executive Summary*. 2024. p. 1.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 1-5.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 1-7.

¹⁸⁰ International Organization for Migration. *A Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration*. 2019. pp. 4-5.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. pp. 1-2.



needs but the needs of the host and country of origin.¹⁸² In addition, IOM created and implemented the *Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance* (2019), which highlights that reintegration can occur across many contexts and provides guidance on how to implement and monitor reintegration to support migrants; this guidance focuses on financial, social, and emotional reintegration processes.¹⁸³

Regional approaches from the EU and ASEAN highlight the importance of cooperation in supporting migrant protection, voluntary return, and reintegration processes.¹⁸⁴ The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) of the EU adopted the *EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration* in 2021, which highlights the importance of developing and implementing AVRR programs.¹⁸⁵ EESC also encouraged enhanced collaboration among all relevant actors to strengthen reintegration and return processes, specifically concerning sustainable reintegration, through improved coordination among Member States, national authorities, local stakeholders, and reintegration service providers.¹⁸⁶ The *ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers*, adopted in 2007, is primarily focused on protecting the rights of migrant workers and encourages cooperation between countries of origin and host countries; as such, this declaration indirectly supports the principles behind safe and dignified return.¹⁸⁷ The *ASEAN Migration Outlook Second Edition*, launched in 2023 during the 17th Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (2007), examines how migration patterns across the area can be shaped by climate change.¹⁸⁸ It highlights the need for regional cooperation and the incorporation of migration into policy planning.¹⁸⁹

Role of the International System

As the coordinator of UNNM, an entity created to promote cooperation, provide guidance, and support the protection of migrants and their human rights, IOM facilitates key processes like the review of the GCM.¹⁹⁰ The GCM was established in 2018 to support challenges migrants face, such as the lack of basic services, including access to housing and healthcare, discrimination, human trafficking, and social inclusion.¹⁹¹ General Assembly resolution 76/266 (2022) on “Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum,” expresses concern about the high number of migrant women and children,

¹⁸² International Organization for Migration. *Return and Reintegration Key Highlights 2023: Executive Summary*. 2024. p. 2.

¹⁸³ International Organization for Migration. *Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance*. 2019. pp. 1-2, 127.

¹⁸⁴ European Union, European Economic and Social Committee. *Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - The EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration*. 2021; Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *2007 ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers*. 2007.

¹⁸⁵ European Union, European Economic and Social Committee. *Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - The EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration*. 2021.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *2007 ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers*. 2007.

¹⁸⁸ International Organization for Migration. *ASEAN Migration Outlook Calls for Climate-Resilient Migration Policies*. 2024.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations Network on Migration. *About Us*. 2026.

¹⁹¹ International Organization for Migration. *United Nations system and UN Network on Migration*. 2026.



especially unaccompanied minor migrants.¹⁹² Resolution 76/266 (2022) reaffirms the responsibility to prevent the loss of migrant lives and condemns acts of racism and discrimination against migrants.¹⁹³ As reported by IOM in *Return and Reintegration Key Highlights*, migration and return are heavily influenced by many factors, including natural disasters, climate change, and economic instability, in addition to the persistent consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁹⁴

UNDP works with many partners, such as IOM and UNHCR, to advance development-led approaches to displacement and migration while supporting the implementation of the GCM.¹⁹⁵ UNDP focuses its initiatives on urgent humanitarian crisis response as well as long-term solutions that aim to tackle the root causes of relocation and mobility, through strengthening governance systems and investing in capacity-building.¹⁹⁶ As stated in UNDP's 2019 report on *Promoting Development Approaches to Migration and Displacement*, the organization is prioritizing efforts on four different components, including addressing root causes of displacement, incorporating migration into development strategies, strengthening resilience for migrants and host communities, and facilitating sustainable reintegration.¹⁹⁷

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) works closely with IOM, most notably in the development of toolkits for integrating migration into sector-specific interventions, meaning policies and programs within key sectors such as those in health, education, security, rural development, employment, environment, and urban development.¹⁹⁸ These toolkits are designed to help actors and governments incorporate migration considerations into planning and decision-making processes across different sectors in a systematic way.¹⁹⁹ For example, a toolkit was created on urban planning to help cities include migration in their decisions about housing and infrastructure.²⁰⁰ *The New Urban Agenda* adopted at the Habitat III Conference in 2016 and later endorsed by the General Assembly, called on Member States to assist authorities on the local and regional level in a range of migration-related areas, including the development of frameworks that contribute to the integration of migrants into communities, policy integration and compliance, and the strengthening of international cooperation.²⁰¹ More recent UN-Habitat programs build upon this approach through urban recovery initiatives, supporting sustainable return and reintegration of migrants and displaced persons by improving access to housing and basic services in areas that are subject to higher levels of returns outlined in UN-Habitat's Urban Recovery Framework (2022).²⁰²

The International Centre for Migration Policy and Development (ICMPD), established as an intergovernmental organization by Switzerland and Austria in 1993, was created to support research and

¹⁹² United Nations, General Assembly. *Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum (A/RES/76/266)*. 2022. pp. 2, 5, 8-9.

¹⁹³ Ibid. pp. 1-2.

¹⁹⁴ International Organization for Migration. *Return and Reintegration Key Highlights 2023: Executive Summary*. 2024.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Promoting Development Approaches to Migration and Displacement*. 2019. p. 4.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 5.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. pp. 5-6.

¹⁹⁸ International Organization for Migration. *Toolkits for Integrating Migration into Sector-specific Interventions*. 2022.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Cities and Migration*. 2026.

²⁰² United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Urban Recovery Framework*. 2022. pp. 7, 25.



development on migration.²⁰³ The organization works with multiple governments to strengthen migration management through advisory support, capacity-building, and cooperation initiatives aimed at improving migration flows.²⁰⁴ ICMPD is the facilitating organization for the Budapest Process, initiated in 1993 to serve as a platform for dialogue on migration matters.²⁰⁵ For over 30 years, the Budapest Process has provided this platform to over 50 participating countries, strengthening their capability of managing migrant movement.²⁰⁶ Over time, these efforts have included the development of policy recommendations and best practice exchanges on areas such as safe and orderly migration, return, and reintegration.²⁰⁷

The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU, known as FRONTEX, plays an essential role in managing Europe's external borders, enabling an integrated approach to confronting the intricate issues of migration at these borders.²⁰⁸ FRONTEX works closely with the OHCHR, as reported in the *Frontex report to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on its activities aimed at protecting migrants at international borders, including migrant children* (2014), in which FRONTEX outlined its operations and goals related to the protection of migrants as well as best practices regarding promoting and protecting the rights of migrants at international borders.²⁰⁹ These efforts included measures aimed at ensuring that the rights of migrants were considered at all stages of border and return procedures.²¹⁰ FRONTEX plays a critical role in supporting such return operations and migration systems, aligning with the EU Strategy on Voluntary Return and Reintegration by facilitating the coordination of return policies among Member States.²¹¹ The *Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action 2018-2030* was adopted in 2018 by the African Union to combat the growing complexity of migration across the continent.²¹² This framework notes that the growing number of migrants across the African region has been driven by conflict, economic hardship, and the increase of globalization.²¹³ Many African governments view migration as both a source of opportunity and a challenge.²¹⁴ While it can place strain on services like housing, education, and healthcare, it can also contribute to economic growth if well managed.²¹⁵ This framework promotes cooperation between states to improve cross-border movement and the integration of migrants into policymaking processes to better address migrant needs.²¹⁶

²⁰³ International Centre for Migration Policy Development. *About ICMPD*. N.d.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ International Centre for Migration Policy Development. *Budapest Process*. N.d.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ European Union, European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union. *Frontex report to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on its activities aimed at protecting migrants at international borders, including migrant children*. 2014.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Ibid; European Union, European Economic and Social Committee. *Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - The EU strategy on voluntary return and reintegration*. 2021.

²¹² African Union Commission. *Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018 – 2030)*. 2018. pp. 8-10.

²¹³ Ibid. pp. 8-13.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid. pp. 11-14.



Community-Based Reintegration and Social Cohesion

IOM believes that community-based reintegration has increased success rates in communities with secure resources and support networks.²¹⁷ However, the process of return can present a risk for returnees and their communities in areas that lack these capacities, such as access to stable employment, fundamental services, and community support systems.²¹⁸ Community-based reintegration is defined by UNDP as an approach that strengthens communities to support individuals reintegrating into society by focusing efforts on social and economic inclusion.²¹⁹ Even in cases where returnees are returning to their country of origin, they can still be faced with unacceptance.²²⁰ IOM encourages community-level interventions aimed at addressing community barriers, empowerment, supporting community resilience and the resilience of returnees, as well as long-term sustainability efforts.²²¹ No single approach to community-based reintegration works in all cases.²²² IOM's reintegration strategies for migrants align with the 2030 Agenda and the GCM.²²³ Some of these strategies consist of community cohesion and migrant inclusion interventions, in addition to emphasizing a community-based approach promoting long-term development and sustainable reintegration, which have shown positive outcomes in supporting reintegration processes.²²⁴

To achieve sustainable reintegration and social cohesion amongst migrants and the community they are returning to, there are several necessary components such as schooling, legal support, housing, and other basic public services and infrastructure.²²⁵ Social cohesion is defined by UNDP as trust between the people and government within a society, as well as the inclination of individuals in a society to work towards common goals.²²⁶ Social cohesion is typically hindered when returnees face specific barriers, like language barriers, which can impede their access to services.²²⁷ One of the most immediate issues many migrants face when returning is a lack of access to housing, and many are vulnerable to being taken advantage of by property managers because returnees typically have limited options and leverage.²²⁸ IOM developed a resource hub for increasing successful reintegration and reducing returnee isolation called the Migrant E-nclusion Resource Hub/platform in 2020, post-COVID.²²⁹ The Migrant E-nclusion Resource Hub is a multi-user platform that was created for migrants, giving them an opportunity to improve their digital skills and find job opportunities, but also as a tool for policymakers to support their initiatives in improving migration policies.²³⁰ In addition to these individuals, the platform is utilized by educators as it gives them access to useful resources for teaching migrants and helps guide employers on inclusive

²¹⁷ International Organization for Migration. *Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance*. 2019. pp. 99-100.

²¹⁸ Ibid. pp. 99-101.

²¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Guidance Note on Supporting Community-Based Reintegration of Former Members of Armed Forces and Groups*. 2024. p. 10.

²²⁰ International Organization for Migration. *Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance*. 2019. p. 121.

²²¹ Ibid. p. 122.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ International Organization for Migration. *Migrant integration*. 2026.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Strengthening social cohesion: Conceptual framing and programming implications*. 2020.

²²⁷ International Organization for Migration. *Migrant integration*. 2026.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ International Organization for Migration. *Migrant E-nclusion Resource Hub*. 2026.

²³⁰ Ibid.



hiring and integration methods.²³¹ UNNM published its report *Mapping: Gaps and positive practices for safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration* in 2021, which outlines existing gaps in the return process.²³² These gaps include a lack of respect for upholding full human rights for all, discrimination, violations of protection principles like inhumane treatment, weak access to justice, and inadequate access to medical care, housing, and social welfare.²³³ Despite commitments adopted by the GCM, like improved security, access to work opportunities, and greater social participation for migrants, implementation varies across Member States, and many do not put them into practice consistently.²³⁴ According to UNNM, this highlights the importance of strengthening community-based reintegration efforts to address protection issues at the local level, thereby supporting sustainable reintegration outcomes.²³⁵

Strengthening AVRR Mechanisms

To some observers, migration might be perceived as a one-directional process, but IOM acknowledges that it is much more intricate.²³⁶ Individuals can migrate for many reasons; sometimes it becomes desirable due to negative changes in an individual's host country or country of origin, it may also be to reconnect with family, or to gain access to better employment opportunities.²³⁷ IOM's Framework for AVRR has a strong focus on AVRR programs, and the IOM has enhanced its capabilities and extended the scope of its AVRR programs globally through multiple partnerships.²³⁸ AVRR programs initially began in Europe with the support of IOM, and a large number of these programs are still represented in the European region to this day.²³⁹ AVRR support can also be extended to migrants experiencing vulnerability due to trafficking or health-related issues, as well as to children who have been separated.²⁴⁰ For these groups, AVRR can provide specialized assistance and referrals to support services, promoting safer returns and reintegration.²⁴¹ Other recipients can also consist of regular migrants, irregular migrants, and asylum seekers.²⁴² AVRR continuously supports the 2030 Agenda, specifically SDG target 10.2, by promoting the financial, governance-related, and societal inclusion of all, thus supporting the reintegration process of returnees, through providing reintegration assistance, livelihood support, and access to services in countries of origin.²⁴³

In regard to migration, IOM emphasises how AVRR programs have become imperative for migrants experiencing hardship regarding safety vulnerabilities and challenges in sustainable reintegration.²⁴⁴ In

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² United Nations Network on Migration. *Mapping: Gaps and positive practices for safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration*. 2021.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ International Organization for Migration, Department of Migration Management. *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration: Supporting Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration*. N.d.

²³⁷ International Organization for Migration, Department of Migration Management. *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration: Supporting Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration*. N.d.

²³⁸ International Organization for Migration. *A Framework for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration*. 2019.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ International Organization for Migration, Department of Migration Management. *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration: Supporting Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration*. N.d.

2020, IOM evaluated AVRR projects and programs in its report *Synthesis Evaluation: Extracting Learning from Evaluations of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVR(R)/PARA) Projects and Programmes* to compile effective strategies and insights from learned experiences and to reflect on the evolution of AVRR programs.²⁴⁵ The report found that there are gaps in existing AVRR programs, including a lack of cost-benefit analyses, which makes it difficult to assess if AVRR programs are being optimized effectively and economically.²⁴⁶ Other gaps include a lack of efficiency, reflected by the limited data on overall AVRR program success rates, as they typically focus on individual outcomes.²⁴⁷ As AVRR programs often rely on factors outside of the Organization's direct influence, they frequently face barriers in fulfilling their objectives.²⁴⁸ Similar approaches have also been supported by UNHCR, which works alongside IOM on AVRR initiatives to facilitate safe, dignified, and sustainable returns for eligible migrants.²⁴⁹

Conclusion

Although migration can be permanent for some individuals, facilitating return is fundamental within the context of international migration.²⁵⁰ IOM's *Policy on the Full Spectrum of Return, Readmission and Reintegration* is key to its work on migration and reintegration, focusing on the protection of human rights and the well-being of returnees.²⁵¹ In recent years, reintegration practices have expanded in scope, which can be attributed to policymakers' understanding of migration at a higher level.²⁵² According to IOM, strengthening AVRR mechanisms requires more comprehensive approaches to ensure humane return processes and sustainable reintegration outcomes for migrants.²⁵³ In addition, community-based reintegration and strengthened social cohesion are essential to achieve inclusive development for migrants and host countries.²⁵⁴ An increased understanding of migration as a whole can directly advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.²⁵⁵ However, limited frameworks exist to guide Member States in providing reintegration assistance to migrants.²⁵⁶ With this in consideration, IOM remains committed to closing the gap by offering policy guidance and supporting the implementation and monitoring of reintegration practices.²⁵⁷

²⁴⁵ International Organization for Migration. *Synthesis Evaluation: Extracting Learning from Evaluations of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVR(R)/PARA) Projects and Programmes*. 2020. pp. 1, 14-15, 19.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. pp. 14-15.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Returning to your country of origin*. N.d.

²⁵⁰ International Organization for Migration. *Safe, dignified and rights-based return and reintegration*. 2026.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² International Organization for Migration. *Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance*. 2019. p. 2.

²⁵³ International Organization for Migration, Department of Migration Management. *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration: Supporting Dignified Return and Sustainable Reintegration*. N.d.

²⁵⁴ International Organization for Migration. *Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance*. 2019. pp. 99-100.

²⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 374.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 10-12.

²⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 7.



Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How can reintegration programs be improved to ensure long-term sustainability? How can cooperation between Member States be strengthened to improve reintegration processes? What kind of measures can be taken to ensure that returns remain voluntary and safe? Are there any specific challenges faced by returnees in the region of your Member State? In what ways can the stigma around returnees be reduced?



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